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ABSTRACT

Evaluation processes and procedures for a collaborative teacher education program are contrasted to those typically used in a cooperative teacher education program. The research method used to set generic collaborative preservice teacher objectives in professional knowledge and educational beliefs is described. The two-year design will use pre- and post-assessment of preservice students in educational beliefs, a classroom performance assessment revised from a state-wide beginning teacher assessment system, the collaborative student teaching assessment, and other university data. The paper also describes the organizational changes necessary to conduct an evaluation of a collaborative teacher education program in data collection, program recordkeeping, and data management systems. Other organizational changes included development of the evaluation design by a university-school system committee, adjustment of the typical external evaluator role, and judicious use of the power and knowledge of the administrators of both institutions. (JD)

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THE COMPLEXITIES OF A COLLABORATIVE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

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THE COMPLEXITIES OF A COLLABORATIVE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

Sally Schumacher

Evaluating a collaborative teacher education program is a more complex task than one of evaluating a cooperative teacher education program. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) conducted program evaluation previously in a typical cooperative manner, i.e. VCU set the objectives and student outcomes, gathered the data, determined its meaning, and used the results for university purposes. This was done by recording cooperating teacher assessments on university practica and student teaching forms, mutually arriving at a student grade by the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher, and conducting various follow-up surveys of our graduates. This information was fed back to appropriate university personnel for continuous program development.

The formative evaluation of the field testing of one project component (Schumacher, 1984) in spring of 1984 identified four questions which would have to be addressed in proposing a summative evaluation design for the three year Collaborative Teacher Education Project (CoTEEP). These questions were: 1) What kinds of evaluation practices for the project are consistent with the legal context of teacher evaluation in which both the university and school system operate; 2) What kinds of evaluation practices are politically acceptable to both institutions; 3) Which project evaluation procedures are consistent with both inservice teachers' views and university consultants' views on evaluation and with the nature of the

teaching role; and 4) What institutional changes are necessary to conduct the evaluation? (Strike and Millman, 1983.)

This paper addresses the four questions by describing the research methods used to set preservice teacher objectives in knowledge, beliefs, and classroom performance, the organizational changes necessary to conduct the evaluation, and evaluation management as it relates to roles and processes.

Preservice Teacher Outcomes and Standards

In a teacher education program which is collaborative in fact rather than just intent, it seems logical that both university and school participants would determine student outcomes and standards. According to Popham (1975), when pre-determined student objectives are compared to student outcomes, one indicator of program success can be measured and accountability demonstrated.

The program plan which was officially funded and implemented January, 1984, described program goals and a collaborative process. The program plan did not state student objectives much less standards for determination of success. Nor did VCU documents yield a common set of preservice teacher objectives which were generic to all 12 teacher education programs in the School of Education and those programs housed in three other schools in the university.

Preservice teacher objectives can be categorized as those relating to professional knowledge, to educational beliefs, and to classroom performance. A 14 page instrument with 60 items as a representative sample

of Professional Knowledge and 57 items on Educational Beliefs was adopted from the Michigan State University survey. The items for both knowledge and beliefs represented five domains: students, social context of schooling, curriculum, teachers, and teaching strategies. The respondent is asked to rate the Professional Knowledge items for degree of importance on a five point scale and the Educational Beliefs items for the direction of the belief and the degree of importance. Respondents could also add additional statements.

The Professional Knowledge and Educational Beliefs Inventory was administered to all School of Education faculty and other VCU teacher educators. In addition, the instrument was administered to school participants in the collaborative program. The data will be analyzed to identify those areas of Professional Knowledge and Educational Beliefs which both university and school participants agree are crucial or very important. If a discrepancy occurs between university and school participants' expectations for preservice teachers, these will be presented to the participants for discussion.

The search for an objective and valid means of assessing preservice teachers' classroom performance was more problematic. Because the collaborative program is developing and evaluation resources are limited, it seemed best to use an existing teacher assessment system which already had demonstrated content validity and performance standards. Both university and school participants reviewed several teacher performance systems and selected from the Georgia Beginning Teacher Assessment Program: Teaching Plans and Materials, Classroom Procedures, and Interpersonal

Skills Instruments. The Georgia assessment system met the above criteria, communicated to both university and school personnel, and provided an independent measure of student teacher performance in addition to the ratings done by the university supervisor, cooperating teacher, and the building principal. Another possibility, if feasible, is to compare the performance of student teachers who are in the collaborative teacher education program with student teachers in existing cooperative teacher education programs.

Evaluation Design and Organizational Change

The evaluation design has impacted or will impact on the VCU School of Education three ways: systematic program evaluation of preservice teachers while they are still in the teacher education program, establishing a centralized recordkeeping system, and initiating an evaluation data management system.

Systematic evaluation of preservice candidates while they are in the teacher education program contrasts to the present procedure of conducting self-report follow-up surveys of graduates and information collected from their principals. One longitudinal study using an entering and exit survey is presently being conducted. The entering survey is an adoption of the Michigan State University (MSU) Entering Teacher Candidate survey. The VCU instrument is a 200 item, 16 page survey of the preservice teacher's high school background and activities, college background, career plans, general orientation to teaching and to education, demographic characteristics and an Educational Beliefs Inventory. About 50 percent of the items will be

used again in the exit survey. With the objective-setting study conducted with university and school participants, we will also be able to compare student educational beliefs with expectations of the university-school personnel.

A second organizational impact of the evaluation design is on the recordkeeping system. Because students are to obtain their field experiences, practicas and student-teaching in different schools, a centralized recordkeeping system is necessary for the program advisor, the faculty members teaching field-based courses, and the evaluator. The recordkeeping system used for elementary and secondary education majors in one Division may be appropriate for other undergraduate education majors.

A third organizational impact of the evaluation design is the initiation of a School of Education data management system. All data collection on preservice teachers will be placed in a Wilbur file in the School of Business where our computer facilities are housed. Existing files are the Preservice Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs objective-setting study and the entering teacher survey. Additional files will store the performance data and the exit survey. A statistician-computer programmer is developing the data analysis program. Long range plans are to have a School of Education microcomputer and a School of Education faculty member do the programs for data analysis.

Evaluation Management

The 1984 formative evaluation report made the following recommendation: "The Planning Committee should appoint the Evaluation Specialist as

an ex-officio member and an Evaluation sub-committee to determine evaluation needs, to critically appraise the validity and reliability of existing instruments and procedures for the CoTEEP evaluation, and to facilitate data collection. It is suggested that the committee collectively have knowledge of the personnel policies of each institution, the CoTEEP programmatic activities, and research design." (Schumacher, 1984, pp. 70-71)

The Evaluation committee was established and is meeting monthly. Members from the school system include a central office person, a principal, a curriculum specialist, and a cooperating teacher. The other members are university-based: Project Co-Director, Coordinator of Clinical Experience, and a consultant. It was primarily designed to include as much as the formal and informal power structure of both institutions and a collectively broad knowledge and experiential base rather than measurement, statistical, or educational researcher expertise. However, research expertise is present. I serve as Chairperson and Secretary. Although I don't relish secretarial duties, it is important to have the minutes state clearly the information provided and discussed, decisions, delegation of tasks to be done for the next meeting, and continuing tasks necessary to develop a comprehensive evaluation design. (See Figure 1.)

The information reviewed by this committee has been my written analysis of the following: the MSU Entering and Exit Survey and Interview Schedule, the six instruments of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program, three instruments of the Georgia Beginning Teacher Assessment Program, and the validation instrument for the Virginia Teacher Assistance Program. The

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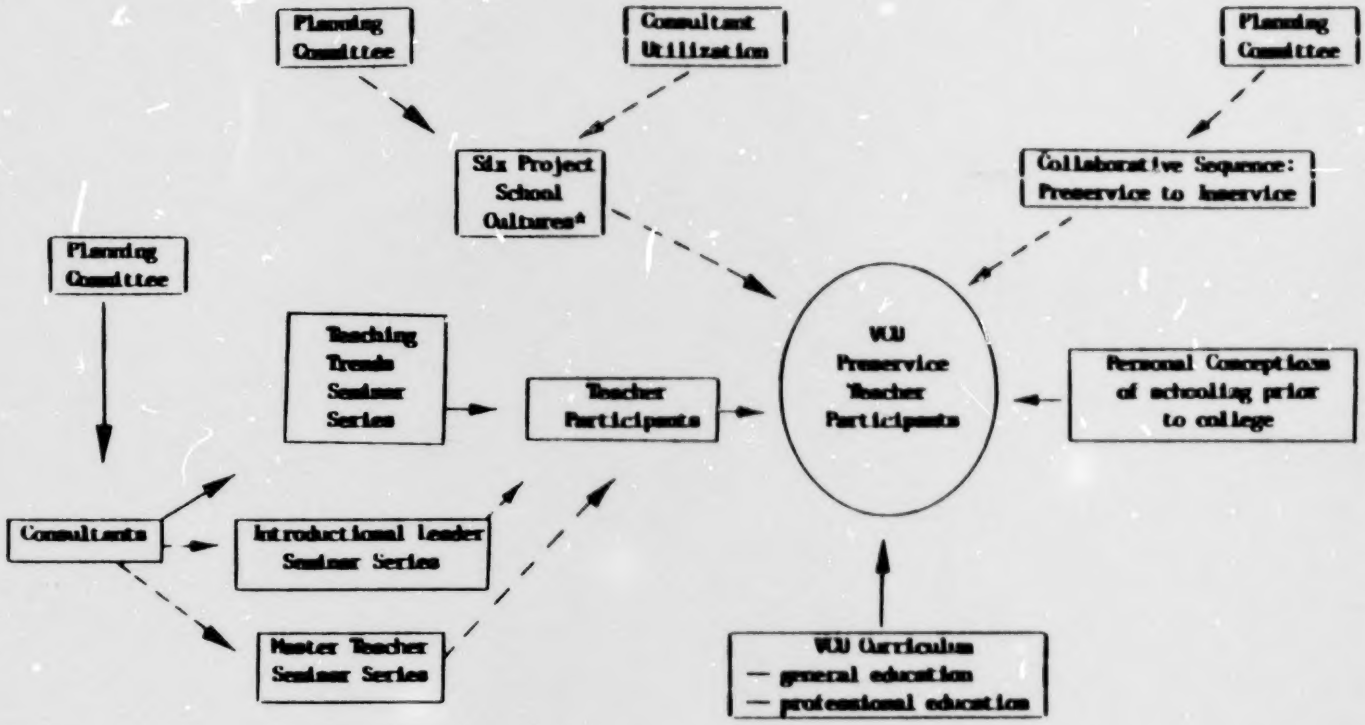

———— Component in operation, June 1984

- - - - - - - - Component to be implemented

* school culture: Program, organizational structure, students, community, rules and regulations, roles and norms, staff (faculty, administration, non-teaching staff).

FIGURE 1: EVALUATION FOCUS FOR Co-TEEP SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

Schumacher, S. (1984) Evaluation of CoTEEP Field-Testing of Workshop-Seminar Series and Principles for Summative Evaluation, 1984. Richmond, VA: Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Education.

Committee served as the panel of experts to validate the VCU Entering Teacher Candidates Survey and the VCU Teacher Education Professional Knowledge and Beliefs Inventory.

The following decisions have been made. After reviewing a description of the VCU Generic Elementary Teacher Education Program, the Committee decided to begin the longitudinal study when students entered the Teacher Education program rather than when students obtained their first field experiences in schools in Clinical Teacher Education. This meant that the target population for the student outcomes studies will be those students enrolled in the foundation courses of fall of 1984, in field experiences and practicas spring and fall of 1985, student teaching, spring of 1986, and beginning teacher during the academic year of 1986-87. Thus the entering and exit data will be collected fall, 1984, and spring, 1986. Second, both university and school-based participants should participate in the study which determines Teacher Education Professional Knowledge and Beliefs objectives. Third, as noted above, the instruments and standards of the Georgia Beginning Teacher Assessment Program will be adopted for data collection during the student teacher semester.

Continuing tasks identified by the Evaluation Committee are three-fold. Comparison studies could be conducted on student teachers, however, information will not be available to make this decision until next year. Data need to be collected on the beginning teacher in 1986-87, but this has not yet been discussed. Finally, the committee needs to articulate objectives other than those related to beginning teachers which

need evaluation. This specifically relates to the collaborative nature of the program development and program management.

Another aspect of evaluation management is the role of the evaluator and the ad hoc committee members in this effort. I have served as an External Evaluation Specialist for a number of federal projects, a state association study, and a private foundation project. I usually follow a combination of the decision-making evaluation model (Stufflebeam, 1971) and responsive evaluation (Stake, 1976 and Guba and Lincoln, 1981) because the entity to be evaluated has been innovative (McMillan and Schumacher, 1984). In these models the evaluator is interactive primarily with one decision-maker and to a lesser extent with other project participants. In addition, the evaluator is primarily responsible for the evaluation design. I always go through a review process with the decision-maker before producing the final copy of the evaluation report.

The role this evaluation effort demands is more complex. There are two organizations rather than one organization with its external audiences. Thus, the typical work of establishing interpersonal relations, learning the organizational structure and rhythms of operation, and the formal and informal power systems on one topic--teacher education--has become doubled. All evaluation ideas, decisions, and feasibility issues must be openly discussed, communicated to several groups, and documented. Continual feedback and organizational adjustment to changing situations, personnel, and audiences is frustrating but essential.

In addition, one of the organizations is my own institution. I am not a faculty member in the Teacher Education Division nor have I taught

undergraduate education. In essence, this research topic, except for a brief interlude in my doctoral program 15 years ago, is entirely new to me. All evaluation efforts rely extensively on the cooperation and professionalism of the Teacher Education Division and the Foundations faculties in supplying documents, responding to interviews, reviewing generic program descriptions, and reviewing instruments. By relying on cooperation and professionalism the evaluator's role is time-consuming and consensus-building. The role is also one of serving as an advocate for systematic evaluation--that is clarifying objectives, stating the need for valid and reliable information, and suggesting how such information can be useful. The entire evaluation effort is a shared responsibility.

Part of the role is one of continually searching for institutional resources in the School of Education and the university. This involves locating human resources to copy over IBM score sheets, do complex word processing for instruments, and a host of secretarial jobs. It also involves locating institutional records, and creating permanent data storage files and recordkeeping systems. In other words, the organization must now respond to evaluation needs rather than to just programmatic needs.

A third aspect of evaluation management is the judicious use of the power and knowledge of the administrators of both the School of Education and the school system. These administrators have been an invaluable resource for locating teacher education literature, instruments from other universities and state departments of education, and ideas on management. They receive all Committee minutes, brainstorm ideas on instruments and

data analysis, and state programmatic needs when it requires faculties to administer an instrument to students or complete an instrument for the objective-setting study. Without the strong support of these administrators, the evaluation effort would probably be resisted more because of faculty and public school prerogatives and priorities. Without the support and cooperation of the administrators of each institution and the active role of the Evaluation Committee, the summative evaluation design would not be as well developed as it presently is.

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